

# **Agriculture Risk Management Education Competitive Grants Program**

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***Fiscal Year 2002***

***Request for Applications***

**Application Deadline: March 18, 2002**

**U.S. Department of Agriculture**

## **Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service**

**SUMMARY:** The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) announces the availability of grant funds and requests applications for the Agriculture Risk Management Education Competitive Grants Program (RME) for fiscal year (FY) 2002 to provide comprehensive risk management education for agricultural producers in the United States. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2002 is approximately \$1,920,000.

This notice identifies the objectives for RME projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a RME grant. CSREES additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next Request for Applications (RFA) for this program.

**DATES:** Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on March 18, 2002 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this RFA are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

**ADDRESSES:** The address for hand-delivered applications or applications submitted using an express mail or overnight courier service is: Agriculture Risk Management Education Competitive Grants Program; c/o Proposal Services Unit; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Room 1307, Waterfront Centre; 800 9<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.; Washington, D.C. 20024; Telephone: (202) 401-5048.

Applications sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be sent to the following address: Agriculture Risk Management Education Competitive Grants Program; c/o Proposal Services Unit; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2245; 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.; Washington, D.C. 20250-2245.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy and Program Liaison Staff; Office of Extramural Programs; USDA-CSREES; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.; Washington, D.C. 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: [RFP-OEP@reeusda.gov](mailto:RFP-OEP@reeusda.gov). (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Agriculture Risk Management Education Competitive Grants Program RFA.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Dr. Donald A. West, National Program Leader, Farm Business Management, Economic and Community Systems Unit, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2215, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-2215; telephone: (202) 720-7166; fax: (202) 690-3162; e-mail: [dwest@reeusda.gov](mailto:dwest@reeusda.gov).

**STAKEHOLDER INPUT:** CSREES is requesting comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program. Such comments will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFA's for competitive programs. Comments should be submitted as provided for in the **Addresses** and **Dates** portions of this Notice.

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE:** This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.500, Agriculture Risk Management Education Competitive Grants Program.

## *Table of Contents*

### **PART I--GENERAL INFORMATION**

- A. Legislative Authority and Background
- B. Purpose, Priorities, and Fund Availability
- C. Eligibility
- D. Matching Requirements
- E. Funding Restrictions
- F. Types of Applications

### **PART II--PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

- A. Project Types
- B. Program Description

### **PART III--PREPARATION OF AN APPLICATION**

- A. Program Application Materials
- B. Content of Applications
- C. Submission of Applications
- D. Acknowledgment of Applications

### **PART IV--REVIEW PROCESS**

- A. General
- B. Evaluation Criteria
- C. Conflicts-of-Interest and Confidentiality

### **PART V--AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

- A. General
- B. Organizational Management Information
- C. Award Document and Notice of Award

### **PART VI--ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- A. Access to Review Information
- B. Use of Funds; Changes
- C. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements
- D. Applicable Federal Statutes and Regulations
- E. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards
- F. Regulatory Information
- G. Definitions

# **PART I--GENERAL INFORMATION**

## ***A. Legislative Authority and Background***

Section 133 of the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000, Pub. L. 106-224, amended the Federal Crop Insurance Act to add section 524(a)(3), which requires the Secretary, acting through the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), to establish a competitive grants program for the purpose of educating agricultural producers about the full range of risk management activities. These activities include futures, options, agricultural trade options, crop insurance, cash forward contracting, debt reduction, production diversification, farm resources risk reduction and other risk management strategies.

The RME program brings the existing knowledge base to bear on risk management issues faced by agricultural producers and expands the program throughout the nation.

Applicants are encouraged to recognize the risk management education needs of all producers, including small-scale and minority producers and women, while giving special consideration to educational needs of producers who have had limited exposure to risk management concepts, tools and strategies. (See Part VI.G. for definitions applicable to this program.)

## ***B. Purpose, Priorities and Fund Availability***

### **1. Purpose and Priorities**

The program will support a wide range of extension education activities in risk management for agricultural producers. The primary purpose is to provide U.S. agricultural producers with the knowledge, skills and tools needed to make informed risk management decisions for their operations. Applicant activities should include: the use of existing and the formation of new educational networks focused on agricultural producers; further development of agricultural risk management curricula and materials; the delivery of agricultural RME to producers using one or more of the wide range of delivery methods; and the verification of program impacts.

Priority will be given to projects that recognize and document the RME needs of producers as they exist at regional, state and local levels, and propose effective educational programs that address those needs. Regionally based programs should be flexible while addressing special needs as determined by: producer audiences; commodity mixes; types of risks associated with production, marketing, financial, legal and human resource conditions; and/or other factors that hold the greatest potential for assisting producers.

### **2. Fund Availability**

The amount of funds available in FY 2002 for support of grant awards under this program is approximately \$1,920,000. There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

## ***C. Eligibility***

Applications may be submitted by qualified public and private entities. This includes all colleges and universities, Federal, State, and local agencies, nonprofit and for-profit private organizations or corporations, and other entities.

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

#### ***D. Matching Requirements***

There is no requirement for grant recipients to provide matching funds under this program.

#### ***E. Funding Restrictions***

Program funds may not be used for the renovation or refurbishment of research, education or extension space; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such space; or the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

#### ***F. Types of Applications***

In FY 2002, applications may be submitted to the RME Program as one of the following three types of requests:

- (1) **New application.** This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the RME Program. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part IV--Review Process.
- (2) **Renewal application.** This is a project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in an original or amended award. Applications for renewed funding must contain the same information as required for new applications, and additionally must contain a Progress Report (see Project Description, Part III.B.6). Renewal applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.
- (3) **Resubmitted application.** This is an application that had previously been submitted to the RME Program but not funded. Project Directors (PD's) must respond to the previous review panel summary (see Response to Previous Review, Part III.B.5). Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

## **PART II-- PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

## ***A. Project Types***

### **1. Regional Centers**

RME Centers will be supported in the Northeastern, Southern, North Central and Western Regions of the United States. These are the primary delivery mechanisms for RME, and approximately four-fifths of the total funding will be used to support these Centers. Each Regional RME Center will be supported at up to \$500,000 for approximately one year at a level reflective of the activities proposed. The extent of Center's proposed activities and the amount of the award is expected to vary in accordance with the number of producers in the region, the number of public and private institutions and other partners involved, the types of agricultural risks that prevail, the range of commodities and specialty crops involved and other relevant factors. The budget request should be at levels reflective of the scope of the proposed activity, recognizing the program complexity and the numbers and characteristics of targeted producers.

The Regional Centers are expected to conduct projects within their region. These projects are to be solicited and selected for funding by the RME Center recipient through a competitive process. The Centers may also support special projects for training, coordination and communication networks that are developed, with stakeholder input, and conducted by the Centers.

Receipt of a Regional Center grant under this RFA is not a guarantee of receipt of future grant funds under this program. Applications for continuation grants under this program in future years will be subject to competition.

### **2. Standard Projects**

Approximately \$384,000 is available for proposals for national or multi-regional grants in FY 2002. Proposals can be up to three years in length with a budget of not more than \$300,000 for the full period proposed.

## ***B. Program Description***

Proposals should build on effective programs on agricultural risk management that have been developed within the Land Grant College and University System and/or have evolved within recent years with support from the Risk Management Agency of USDA and involvement of partners in the private sector. A national AgRisk Electronic Library (Website: <http://www.agrisk.umn.edu>) established in 1998, provides ready access to materials documenting these programs. The applicant should focus on providing RME to producers, building on the educational base and networks that have been established. This expanded program will take place through the four Regional Centers and projects funded at the national level through Standard Project grants.

### **Regional Risk Management Education Centers**

The USDA, using stakeholder input, has placed a high priority on the Regional RME Centers as a means of meeting the specific risk management education needs that exist within regions. The

Centers will assist the USDA and its other partners to conduct a national RME program to address regional, state and local needs. The Regional Centers should address specific regional risk management education needs, diverse audiences, commodity and enterprise mixes, and other conditions that exist at the regional, state and local levels. Educational programs will cover the full range of risk management activities, including futures, options, agricultural trade options, crop insurance, cash forward contracting, debt reduction, production diversification, farm resources risk reduction, and other risk management strategies.

Development and delivery of effective RME programs must take into account regional, state and local issues affecting producers as well as common RME components that exist across the nation. The Centers should facilitate rapid feedback from producers and other stakeholders within the region, and tailor the RME program to meet specific and emerging needs.

Regional RME Centers will have primary responsibility for development and implementation of agricultural RME programs within their respective regions. Regional RME Centers will be the locus for building partnerships among public and private entities. The Centers will solicit and select regional projects through a competitive process taking into consideration stakeholder input. The Centers should promote collaboration that includes the exchange of materials and information, open communication, and integration of activities around RME issues within the region. Centers should bring together the expertise and knowledge needed to address RME issues, drawing from regional sources and from national or multi-regional projects that provide broad or specialized knowledge for a particular situation.

The four Regional RME Centers will be the primary vehicle for delivering RME to agricultural producers, recognizing the special needs, audiences, commodities, production and marketing conditions and other regional factors that must be considered in developing and delivering effective RME programs. They will be expected to verify activities and report program results on a continuing basis.

Applicants for the four Regional RME Centers should present plans that demonstrate their program and administrative capacity to solicit, select and support a set of RME projects that address the RME priorities within their region. These plans should indicate how RME coverage will be provided to all producers within the region and should recognize the role of women in risk management decision-making. They should give special consideration to targeted producer audiences, including small-scale and minority producers that have special RME needs.

Proposals will be expected to meet the following objectives:

1. Provide regional RME program leadership and coordination, including a plan for reaching agricultural producers with RME programs. This includes developing and implementing mechanisms that identify agricultural RME needs that are specific to producers within the region. Applicants should recognize the importance of specialty crops within the region and risks associated with them. An emphasis should be placed on the development and implementation of programs to reach producers with little or no prior exposure to RME, and that recognizes minority producers and the role of women, spouses and the family in decision-making.



2. Give attention to RME needs of specially targeted audiences including small-scale and minority producers and to specific types of risks, commodities and other conditions that exist within the region. Focus on specially targeted audiences will include the development and/or acquisition of relevant materials and curricula, and the provision of updates on changes in crop insurance and other risk management programs in formats that communicate with these audiences.
3. Utilize an entity, such as an Advisory Council, that represents stakeholders and will ensure that planning, project selection and funding determined at the regional level occurs with a broad base of support consistent with stakeholder needs. Plans should include procedures for regional representation on a national coordinating body.
4. Implement a competitive process for selection of regional projects and allocation of regional funds. This process must be consistent with the requirements and guidelines established for the entire RME program.
5. Promote partnering among public and private entities within the region.
6. Conduct regional training workshops on existing or emerging risk management topics, as needed.
7. Utilize a regionally based RME program outcome verification system and communication network that will document program results and promote communication within and across regions, and nationally.

Proposed budgets for the Regional RME Center grants may include funding for the Center Director and support staff. Additional funding may be used to support Center activities including needs assessment, stakeholder input and guidance, regional competitive processes, regional training efforts and materials development and other necessary activities conducted by the Center.

### Standard Projects

Approximately \$384,000 has been allocated to support Standard RME Projects. These projects must have nationwide (or multi-state) applicability and complement the entire Program. Requested funds for a single proposal for a national project cannot exceed a total of \$300,000 for a duration of up to three years. The amount requested must be commensurate with the activities proposed. These projects are expected to address special issues that foster nationwide exchanges of RME information and materials, enhance verification and reporting of results, and promote coordination across regional programs while avoiding duplication of efforts. Standard Projects will be encouraged to coordinate with the regional projects and complement cross-regional activities. Proposals that build on existing information networks and offer innovative or expanded activities are encouraged.

Standard Project proposals will be expected to meet one or more of the following objectives:

1. Meet a specialized RME need that is national in scope, e.g. national coordination of RME efforts, and that has common characteristics that can be addressed in a single project;
2. Provide a national source of RME information, materials and software that may be readily accessed nationally and internationally through electronic media;
3. Develop and maintain a national database that compiles results from Regional RME Centers and other projects, including verification of outcomes and accomplishments, and compile reports that can be used to inform stakeholders;
4. Conduct national conferences, meetings and/or workshops that enhance sharing of regional RME program results, promote program coordination and train educators on new risk management tools and strategies.

## **PART III--PREPARATION OF A PROPOSAL**

### ***A. Program Application Materials***

Program application materials are available at the CSREES Funding Opportunities web site (<http://www.reeusda.gov/1700/funding/ourfund.htm>). If you do not have access to the web page or have trouble downloading material and you would like a hardcopy, you may contact the Proposal Services Unit, Office of Extramural Programs, USDA/CSREES at (202) 401-5048. When calling the Proposal Services Unit, please indicate that you are requesting the RFA and associated application forms for the Agriculture Risk Management Education Competitive Grants Program. These materials also may be requested via Internet by sending a message with your name, mailing address (not e-mail) and phone number to [psb@reeusda.gov](mailto:psb@reeusda.gov). State that you want a copy of the RFA and the associated application forms for the Agriculture Risk Management Education Competitive Grants Program.

### ***B. Content of Proposals***

The proposals should be prepared following the guidelines and the instructions below. Each proposal must contain the following elements in the order indicated:

#### **1. General**

Use the following guidelines to prepare an application. Proper preparation of applications will assist reviewers in evaluating the merits of each application in a systematic, consistent fashion:

- (a) Prepare the application on only one side of the page using standard size (8 1/2" x 11") white paper, one-inch margins, typed or word processed using no type smaller than 12 point font, and single or double spaced. Use an easily readable font face (e.g., Geneva, Helvetica, Times Roman).
- (b) Number each page of the application sequentially, starting with the Project Description, including the budget pages, required forms, and any appendices.
- (c) Staple the application in the upper left-hand corner. Do not bind. An original and 14 copies (15 total) must be submitted in one package, along with five additional copies of the "Project Summary," Form CSREES-2003, as a separate attachment.
- (d) Include original illustrations (photographs, color prints, etc.) in all copies of the application to prevent loss of meaning through poor quality reproduction.
- (e) The contents of the application should be assembled in the following order:
  - (1) Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002)
  - (2) Table of Contents
  - (3) Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003)
  - (4) Response to Previous Review
  - (5) Project Description

- (6) References
- (7) Appendices to Project Description
- (8) Key Personnel
- (9) Collaborative Arrangements (including Letters of Support)
- (10) Conflict-of-Interest List (Form CSREES-2007)
- (11) Budget (Form CSREES-2004)
- (12) Budget Narrative
- (13) Matching
- (14) Current and Pending Support (Form CSREES-2005)
- (15) Assurance Statement(s) (Form CSREES-2008)
- (16) Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Form CSREES-2006)
- (17) Page B, Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002), Personal Data on Project Director

## **2. Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002)**

### **Page A**

Each copy of each grant application must contain a “Proposal Cover Page,” Form CSREES-2002. One copy of the application, preferably the original, must contain the pen-and-ink signature(s) of the proposing PD’s and the authorized organizational representative (AOR), the individual who possesses the necessary authority to commit the organization’s time and other relevant resources to the project. If there are more than four co-PD’s for an application, please list additional co-PD’s on a separate sheet of paper (with appropriate information and signatures) and attach to the Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002). Any proposed PD or co-PD whose signature does not appear on Form CSREES-2002 or attached additional sheets will not be listed on any resulting grant award. Complete both signature blocks located at the bottom of the “Proposal Cover Page” form. Please note that Form CSREES-2002 is comprised of two parts-- Page A which is the “Proposal Cover Page” and Page B which is the “Personal Data on Project Director.”

Form CSREES-2002 serves as a source document for the CSREES grant database; it is therefore important that it be accurately completed in its entirety, especially the e-mail addresses requested in blocks 4.c. and 18.c. However, the following items are highlighted as having a high potential for errors or misinterpretations:

- (a) Type of Performing Organization (Block 6A and 6B). For block 6A, a check should be placed in the appropriate box to identify the type of organization which is the legal recipient named in block 1. Only one box should be checked. For block 6B, please check as many boxes that apply to the affiliation of the PD listed in block 16.
- (b) Title of Proposed Project (Block 7). The title of the project must be brief (140-character maximum, including spaces), yet represent the major thrust of the effort being proposed. Project titles are read by a variety of nonscientific

people; therefore, highly technical words or phraseology should be avoided where possible. In addition, introductory phrases such as “investigation of,” “research on,” “education for,” or “outreach that” should not be used.

- (c) Program to Which You Are Applying (Block 8). Enter Agriculture Risk Management Education Competitive Grants Program.
- (d) Type of Request (Block 14). Check the block for New, Renewal or Resubmission.
- (e) Project Director (PD) (Blocks 16-19). Blocks 16-18 are used to identify the PD and Block 19 to identify co-PDs. If needed, additional co-PD’s may be listed on a separate sheet of paper and attached to Form CSREES-2002, the Proposal Cover Page, with the applicable co-PD information and signatures. Listing multiple co-PDs, beyond those required for genuine collaboration, is discouraged.
- (f) Other Possible Sponsors (Block 21). List the names or acronyms of all other public or private sponsors including other agencies within USDA to which your application has been or might be sent. In the event you decide to send your application to another organization or agency at a later date, you must inform the identified CSREES program contact as soon as practicable. Submitting your application to other potential sponsors will not prejudice its review by CSREES; however, submitting the same (i.e., duplicate) application to another CSREES program is not permissible.

### **Page B**

Page B should be submitted only with the original signature copy of the application and should be placed as the last page of the original copy of the application. This page contains personal data on the PD(s). CSREES requests this information in order to monitor the operation of its review and awards processes. This page will not be duplicated or used during the review process. Please note that failure to submit this information will in no way affect consideration of your application.

## **3. Table of Contents**

For consistency and ease in locating information, each application must contain a detailed Table of Contents immediately following the proposal cover page. The Table of Contents should contain page numbers for each component of the application. Page numbering should begin with the first page of the Project Description.

## **4. Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003)**

The application must contain a “Project Summary,” Form CSREES-2003. The summary should be approximately 250 words, contained within the box, placed immediately after the Table of Contents, and not numbered. The names and affiliated organizations of all PD’s and co-PD’s

should be listed on this form, in addition to the title of the project. The summary should be a self-contained, specific description of the activity to be undertaken and should focus on: overall project goal(s) and supporting objectives; plans to accomplish project goal(s); and relevance of the project to the goals of the RME Program. The importance of a concise, informative Project Summary cannot be overemphasized. If there are more than four co-PD's for an application, please list additional co-PD's on a separate sheet of paper (with appropriate information) and attach to the Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003).

## **5. Response to Previous Review**

This requirement only applies to "Resubmitted Applications" as described under Part I, F, "Types of Applications." Project Directors (PD's) must respond to the previous review panel summary on no more than one page, titled "RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEW," which is to be placed directly after the "Project Summary," Form CSREES-2003.

## **6. Project Description**

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Description shall not exceed 15 pages of written text and up to five additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum (20 pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition.

The Project Description should clearly and concisely indicate how the proposed project will meet the objectives and carry out the procedures identified in Part II-Program Description. This section should contain the following:

- An introduction which states the goals and objectives of the proposed activities, documents needs, describes ongoing related activities and include relevant data;
- An approach which identifies 1) proposed activities and methods, 2) expected outcomes, 3) how outcomes will benefit producers, and 4) indicators which will verify program results;
- A timetable which specifies expected completion dates for phases of the project; and
- Identification of collaborative arrangements including description(s) of how they contribute to completion of the entire project.

## **7. References**

All references to works cited should be complete, including titles and all co-authors, and should conform to an acceptable journal format. References are not considered in the page-limitation for the Project Description.

## **8. Appendices to Project Description**

Appendices to the Project Description are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.

## **9. Key Personnel**

The following should be included, as applicable:

- (a) The roles and responsibilities of each PD and/or collaborator should be clearly described; and
- (b) Vitae of the PD and each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel. This section should include vitae of all key persons who are expected to work on the project, whether or not CSREES funds are sought for their support. The vitae should be limited to two (2) pages each in length, excluding publications listings. The vitae should include a presentation of academic and research credentials, as applicable, e.g., earned degrees, teaching experience, employment history, professional activities, honors and awards, and grants received. A chronological list of all publications in refereed journals during the past four (4) years, including those in press, must be provided for each project member for whom a curriculum vitae is provided. Also list only those non-refereed technical publications that have relevance to the proposed project. All authors should be listed in the same order as they appear on each paper cited, along with the title and complete reference as these usually appear in journals.

## **10. Collaborative Arrangements**

If it will be necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified. If the consultant(s) or collaborator(s) are known at the time of application, a vitae or resume should be provided. In addition, evidence (e.g., letter of support) should be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render these services. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application. See instructions in the application forms for completing Form CSREES-2004, Budget.

## **11. Conflict-of-Interest List (Form CSREES-2007)**

A "Conflict-of-Interest List," Form CSREES-2007, must be provided for all individuals who have submitted a vitae in response to item 9.(b) of this part. Each Form CSREES-2007 should list alphabetically, by the last names, the full names of the individuals in the following categories: (a) All co-authors on publications within the past four years, including pending publications and submissions; (b) all collaborators on projects within the past four years, including current and planned collaborations; (c) all thesis or postdoctoral advisees/advisors within the past four years; and (d) all persons in your field with whom you have had a consulting or financial arrangement within the past four years, who stand to gain by seeing the project funded. This form is necessary to assist program staff in excluding from application review those individuals who have conflicts of interest with the personnel in the grant application. The

program contact must be informed of any additional conflicts of interest that arise after the application is submitted.

## **12. Budget**

### **a. General**

#### **(1) Budget Form (Form CSREES-2004)**

Prepare the Budget, Form CSREES-2004, in accordance with instructions provided with the application forms. A budget form is required for each year of requested support. In addition, a cumulative budget is required detailing the requested total support for the overall project period. The budget form may be reproduced as needed by applicants. Funds may be requested under any of the categories listed on the form, provided that the item or service for which support is requested is allowable under the authorizing legislation, the applicable statutes, regulations, and Federal cost principles, and these program guidelines, and can be justified as necessary for the successful conduct of the proposed project. Applicants also must include a budget narrative to justify their budget requests (see section b. below.)

#### **(2) Indirect Costs**

If available, the current rate negotiated with the cognizant Federal negotiating agency should be used. Indirect costs may not exceed the negotiated rate. If a negotiated rate is used, the percentage and base should be indicated in the space allotted under item L. on the Budget Form. If no rate has been negotiated, a reasonable dollar amount for indirect costs may be requested, which will be subject to approval by USDA. In the latter case, if a proposal is recommended for funding, an indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted prior to award to support the amount of indirect costs requested. CSREES will request an indirect cost rate proposal and provide instructions, as necessary. A proposer may elect not to charge indirect costs and, instead, use all grant funds for direct costs. If indirect costs are not charged, the phrase "None requested" should be written in this space.

### **b. Budget Narrative**

All budget categories, with the exception of Indirect Costs, for which support is requested, must be individually listed (with costs) in the same order as the budget and justified on a separate sheet of paper and placed immediately behind the budget form.

## **13. Current and Pending Support (Form CSREES-2005)**

All applications must contain Form CSREES-2005 listing other current public or private support (including in-house support) to which personnel (i.e., individuals submitting a vitae in response to item 9.(b) of this part) identified in the application have committed portions of their time, whether or not salary support for person(s) involved is included in the budget. Please follow the instructions provided on this form. Concurrent submission of identical or similar applications to



the possible sponsors will not prejudice application review or evaluation by the CSREES. However, an application that duplicates or overlaps substantially with an application already reviewed and funded (or to be funded) by another organization or agency will not be funded under this program. **Please note that the project being proposed should be included in the pending section of the form.**

#### **14. Assurance Statement(s) (Form CSREES-2008)**

A number of situations encountered in the conduct of projects require special assurances, supporting documentation, etc., before funding can be approved for the project. In addition to any other situation that may exist with regard to a particular project, applications involving any of the following elements must comply with the additional requirements as applicable.

##### **a. Recombinant DNA or RNA Research**

As stated in 7 CFR Part 3015.205 (b)(3), all key personnel identified in the application and all endorsing officials of the proposing organization are required to comply with the guidelines established by the National Institutes of Health entitled, "Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules," as revised. If your project proposes to use recombinant DNA or RNA techniques, you must so indicate by checking the "yes" box in Block 20 of Form CSREES-2002 (the Proposal Cover Page) and by completing Section A of Form CSREES-2008. For applicable applications recommended for funding, Institutional Biosafety Committee approval is required before CSREES funds will be released. Please refer to the application forms for further instructions.

##### **b. Animal Care**

Responsibility for the humane care and treatment of live vertebrate animals used in any grant project supported with funds provided by CSREES rests with the performing organization. Where a project involves the use of living vertebrate animals for experimental purposes, all key personnel identified in an application and all endorsing officials of the proposing organization are required to comply with the applicable provisions of the Animal Welfare Act of 1966, as amended (7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.), and the regulations promulgated thereunder by the Secretary in 9 CFR Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4 pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of these animals. If your project will involve these animals, you should check "yes" in block 20 of Form CSREES-2002 and complete Section B of Form CSREES-2008. In the event a project involving the use of live vertebrate animals results in a grant award, funds will be released only after the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee has approved the project. Please refer to the application forms for further instructions.

##### **c. Protection of Human Subjects**

Responsibility for safeguarding the rights and welfare of human subjects used in any grant project supported with funds provided by CSREES rests with the performing

organization. Guidance on this issue is contained in the National Research Act, Pub. L. No. 93-348, as amended, and implementing regulations promulgated by the Department under 7 CFR Part 1c. If you propose to use human subjects in your project, you should check the “yes” box in Block 20 of Form CSREES-2002 and complete Section C of Form CSREES-2008. Please refer to the application forms for additional instructions.

## **15. Certifications**

Note that by signing Form CSREES-2002 the applicant is providing the certifications required by 7 CFR Part 3017, regarding Debarment and Suspension and Drug-Free Workplace, and 7 CFR Part 3018, regarding Lobbying. The certification forms are included in the application package for informational purposes only. These forms should not be submitted with the application since by signing Form CSREES-2002 your organization is providing the required certifications. If the project will involve a subcontractor or consultant, the subcontractor/consultant should submit a Form AD-1048, Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transactions, to the grantee organization for retention in their records. This form should not be submitted to USDA.

## **16. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Form CSREES-2006)**

As outlined in 7 CFR Part 3407 (the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service regulations implementing NEPA), the environmental data for any proposed project is to be provided to CSREES so that CSREES may determine whether any further action is needed. In some cases, however, the preparation of environmental data may not be required. Certain categories of actions are excluded from the requirements of NEPA.

In order for CSREES to determine whether any further action is needed with respect to NEPA, pertinent information regarding the possible environmental impacts of a particular project is necessary; therefore, Form CSREES-2006, “NEPA Exclusions Form,” must be included in the application indicating whether the applicant is of the opinion that the project falls within a categorical exclusion and the reasons therefore. If it is the applicant’s opinion that the proposed project falls within the categorical exclusions, the specific exclusion(s) must be identified.

Even though a project may fall within the categorical exclusions, CSREES may determine that an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement is necessary for an activity, if substantial controversy on environmental grounds exists or if other extraordinary conditions or circumstances are present which may cause such activity to have a significant environmental effect.

## ***C. Submission of Applications***

### **1. When to Submit (Deadline Date)**

Applications must be received by COB on March 18, 2002 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

## **2. What to Submit**

An original and 14 copies must be submitted. In addition submit five copies of the application's Project Summary. All copies of the application and the Project Summary must be submitted in one package.

## **3. Where to Submit**

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit completed applications via overnight mail or delivery service to ensure timely receipt by the USDA. The address for hand-delivered applications or applications submitted using an express mail or overnight courier service is:

Agriculture Risk Management Education Competitive Grants Program  
c/o Proposal Services Unit  
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Room 1307, Waterfront Centre  
800 9<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20024

Telephone: (202) 401-5048

Applications sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be sent to the following address:

Agriculture Risk Management Education Competitive Grants Program  
c/o Proposal Services Unit  
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
STOP 2245  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250-2245

## ***D. Acknowledgment of Applications***

The receipt of all applications will be acknowledged by e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on the Form CSREES-2002. If the applicant's e-mail address is not indicated, CSREES will acknowledge receipt of the application by letter.

If the applicant does not receive an acknowledgment within 60 days of the submission deadline, please contact the program contact. Once the application has been assigned an application number, please cite that number on all future correspondence.

## **PART IV--REVIEW PROCESS**

### ***A. General***

Each application will be evaluated in a 2-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel.

Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

### ***B. Evaluation Factors***

The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA:

#### **1. Regional RME Center Proposals**

Proposals for RME Centers will be evaluated based on the criteria described below.

##### ***a. Focused Development and Delivery of Relevant Risk Management Education Programs to Agricultural Producers - 40 points***

###### **Focus on Producers**

Factors include demonstrated understanding of agricultural RME needs including use of feedback mechanisms that identify emerging needs of producers and indicate program relevance and effectiveness.

###### **Programs Targeted to Regional Agricultural Risk Management Education Needs**

Proposals should identify how RME programming will address regional, state and local risk management issues recognizing educational needs associated with specially targeted audiences, including minorities, women and other family members, and with types of agricultural risks associated with specialty crops and climatic conditions. Innovative approaches that address RME issues are welcomed.

When applicable, projects awarded competitively through the regional centers may address emerging issues that have implications for more than one region. In those cases, proposals that are cross-regional or national in scope are welcomed. When such proposals are submitted in regional competitions, however, the lead institution must be located within the region where the Center considering the proposal is located. Collaborators may be located in other regions.

Use of RME Materials Appropriate for Regional Educational Needs

Factors to be considered will include ready access to existing RME materials that apply to regional risk management issues and the ability to develop additional materials as needed.

Demonstrated Ability to Effectively Deliver Nonformal RME Programs to End-Users

Successful applicants will exhibit a strong track record of attracting end-users to educational offerings and evidence of effective communication and interaction with participants.

*b. Management Capacity to Develop and Maintain a Regional Risk Management Center with Networks to deliver RME Programs - 30 points*

Documentation of How Producer RME Needs will be Identified and Addressed

Suggested approaches may include the use of surveys and feedback mechanisms to identify RME needs and Advisory Councils to provide guidance for competitive processes that solicit and select projects at the regional level. Factors that will be considered include the balanced representation of stakeholders within the Region and a defined role for advisory groups in the decision-making processes for Center activities.

Use of a Competitive Process to Select Projects at the Regional Level

This process should ensure that public and private entities have equal access to opportunities to submit proposals for regional RME projects, that regional RME objectives are clearly identified, and that partnering and joint efforts are encouraged.

Development of a Regional RME Delivery Network

This process should ensure that public and private entities involved in RME participate in an institutional/organizational framework that can coordinate delivery of RME programs to agricultural producers.

Expertise and Institutional/Organizational Support

Center staff should possess adequate training, experience and the capacity to develop and manage regional RME programs, conduct training, and participate in national coordination activities. Institutional/organizational support including facilities should be available.

*c. Verification of Program Impacts - 15 points*

Definition of Performance Targets

Performance targets should be closely related to program objectives and expected outcomes; and should focus on change in the knowledge and behavior of program participants. Indicators may include participant assessments of improved knowledge and stated intentions to alter behavior that improves their management of risks.

Regular and Accurate Reporting of RME Program Activities and Impacts

The process should include the formation of an accountability and reporting system integrated with program objectives and focus on performance, and its use for semi-annual and/or requested reporting at regional and national levels.

d. *Effective Regional Communication Networks and Linkage to a National Network - 15 points*

Capacity to Provide Effective RME Communication at Intra- and Inter-regional Levels

This includes use of media outlets and the distribution of regional RME materials that have nationwide application.

Establishment of a Regional Communication Source

This source should be readily accessible by regional project directors and should be linked to the national Agriculture Risk Library (Website).

Participation in National Conferences and Workshops

This activity should promote program coordination and sharing of materials. Priority will be given to projects that are multistate, multi-institutional, multidisciplinary or projects that integrate agricultural research, education and extension.

2. Standard Project Proposals

Proposals for Agricultural Risk Management Education national projects will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

a. *Addresses a Nationwide or Multi-State RME (Special) Need - 40 points*

Identifies Nationwide RME Special Needs and Proposes Actions To Meet Them

Successful proposals will address a special need that has nationwide applicability and/or cannot effectively or efficiently be addressed within a single region. Proposals that complement regional efforts such as those that provide national coordination, maintenance/expansion of a national AgRisk electronic library, design and conduct of national training conferences, formation of a national outcome verification and reporting system, and development of distance learning techniques applicable to RME audiences will be welcomed.

b. *Program Complementarity and Innovative Characteristics - 20 points*

Complements the Total RME Program

Factors to be considered include the extent to which the proposal indicates how the purpose and objectives complement the total RME program in an effective manner.

#### Adopts Innovative Approaches and Methods

Consideration will be given to those proposals which identify innovative approaches and methods that can lead to more effective and efficient delivery of RME.

#### *c. Capacity to Conduct Projects and Verify Results - 40 points*

##### Expertise and Support

Entities submitting successful proposals will employ, or have access to, personnel with knowledge and experience in agricultural RME and who are able to communicate effectively with other RME projects across the nation. Necessary support personnel and infrastructure are required. Ready access and familiarity with existing RME databases and the ability to use them appropriately to achieve project results is desirable.

##### Verification of Impacts and Distribution of Results

Demonstrated capacity to assemble, summarize, and present data that verify RME program and outcomes impacts and to deliver project materials and results to stakeholders and other RME project leaders with the ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders.

#### ***C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality***

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined by reference to the 2002 Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, Virginia 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2300. Web site: <http://www.hepinc.com>.

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.



## **PART V--AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

### ***A. General***

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of CSREES shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of CSREES as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that the project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by CSREES under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3015 and 3019 of 7 CFR).

### ***B. Organizational Management Information***

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one-time basis as part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another CSREES program. CSREES will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the preaward process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors which may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

### ***C. Award Document and Notice of Award***

The grant award document will provide pertinent instructions and information, including at a minimum, the following:

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Administrator has awarded a grant under the terms of this request for applications;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PD's chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying grant number assigned by the Department;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;

- (6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Administrator during the project period;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the grant is awarded;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the grant award; and
- (10) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by CSREES to carry out its respective granting activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular grant.

## **PART VI--ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### ***A. Access To Review Information***

Copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments will be sent to the applicant PD after the review process has been completed.

### ***B. Use of Funds; Changes***

#### **1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility**

Unless the terms and conditions of the grant state otherwise, the grantee may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of grant funds.

#### **2. Changes in Project Plans**

- a. The permissible changes by the grantee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project grant shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the grantee or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the award document, not the program contact.
- b. Changes in approved goals or objectives shall be requested by the grantee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.
- c. Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the grantee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes.
- d. Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the grantee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the grant.
- e. Changes in Project Period: The project period may be extended by CSREES without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed five years. Any extension of time shall

be conditioned upon prior request by the grantee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of a grant.

- f. **Changes in Approved Budget:** Changes in an approved budget must be requested by the grantee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or grant award.

### ***C. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements***

Funded projects will be expected to verify program accomplishments. Accomplishments can include expanded awareness of the importance of risk management and greater knowledge of risk management tools and strategies among program participants. Evidence of actual or intended beneficial changes in their risk management behavior is particularly desirable, in addition to documentation of producer involvement in program activities. The evidence is expected to include participants' assessment of the value of program materials and instruction, and suggestions for addition or deletion of topics and instructional materials.

Grantees must prepare semi-annual reports that document significant activities or events that show movement toward achieving goals and objectives of the project. The reports should specify performance targets for that period and contain evidence that verifies the extent to which these targets have been met. Regional projects should contribute regularly to a national database that shows the combined impact of the program.

### ***D. Applicable Federal Statutes and Regulations***

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to:

7 CFR Part 1.1--USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

7 CFR Part 3--USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.

7 CFR Part 15, subpart A--USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

7 CFR Part 3015--USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21 and A-122) and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

7 CFR part 3016—Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments

7 CFR Part 3017--USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants).

7 CFR Part 3018--USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

7 CFR Part 3019--USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3052--USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-profit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3407--CSREES procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute)-- prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in Federally assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 et seq.--Bayh-Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in Federally assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR Part 401).

### ***E. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards***

When an application results in a grant, it becomes a part of the record of CSREES transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in a grant will be retained by the Agency for a period of one year. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

### ***F. Regulatory Information***

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule-related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372

which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

## ***G. Definitions***

For the purpose of this program, the following definitions are applicable:

(1) Administrator means the Administrator of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority involved is delegated.

(2) Agricultural Risk Management means the informed use, as appropriate, of the full range of agricultural risk management activities, including futures, options, agricultural trade options, crop insurance, cash forward contracting, debt reduction, production diversification, farm resources risk reduction and other risk management strategies, by agricultural producers. It includes those risks encountered in the production, marketing, financial, legal, and human resource(s) aspects of farm and ranch operations.

(3) Authorized departmental officer means the Secretary or any employee of the Department who has the authority to issue or modify grant instruments on behalf of the Secretary.

(4) Authorized organizational representative means the president, director, chief executive officer, or other designated official of the applicant organization, who has the authority to commit the resources of the organization.

(5) Budget period means the interval of time (usually 12 months) into which the project period is divided for budgetary and reporting purposes.

(6) Cash contributions means the applicant's cash outlay, including the outlay of money contributed to the applicant by non-Federal third parties.

(7) Department or USDA means the United States Department of Agriculture.

(8) Education activity means formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and other related matters such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies.

(9) Extension activity means an act or process that delivers science-based knowledge and informal educational programs to people, enabling them to make practical decisions.

(10) Grant means the award by the Secretary of funds to an eligible organization or individual to assist in meeting the costs of conducting, for the benefit of the public, an identified project which is intended and designed to accomplish the purpose of the program as identified in these guidelines.

(11) Grantee means the organization designated in the grant award document as the responsible legal entity to which a grant is awarded.

(12) Matching means that portion of allowable project costs not borne by the Federal Government, including the value of in-kind contributions.

(13) Partnering means a joint effort among two or more institutions, organizations and/or other entities with the capacity to conduct projects intended and designed to accomplish the purpose of the program.

(14) Peer review means an evaluation of a proposed project for scientific or technical quality and relevance performed by experts with the scientific knowledge and technical skills to conduct the proposed work or to give expert advice on the merits of a project.

(15) Peer review panel means a group of experts qualified by training and/or experience in particular fields to evaluate eligible proposals in those fields submitted under this RFA.

(16) Performance target means expected measurable accomplishments that can be used to document the extent of change brought about by the project.

(17) Principal investigator/Project director means the single individual designated in the grant application and approved by the Secretary who is responsible for the direction and management of the project.

(18) Prior approval means written approval evidencing prior consent by an authorized departmental officer as defined in (3) above.

(19) Producers means individuals, families, or other entities in the U.S. engaged in the business of agricultural production and marketing before the farm gate.

(20) Project means the particular activity within the scope of the program supported by a grant award.

(21) Project period means the period, as stated in the award document, during which Federal sponsorship begins and ends.

(22) Qualified Public and Private Entities means public or private groups, organizations, or institutions that have established and demonstrated capacities to conduct projects that accomplish the purposes of the program as designated in these guidelines.

(23) Secretary means the Secretary of Agriculture and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority involved is delegated.

(24) Third party in-kind contributions means non-cash contributions of property or services provided by non-Federal third parties, including real property, equipment, supplies and other expendable property, directly benefiting and specifically identifiable to a funded project or program.